

13 -- THE GOOD NEWS OF THE JUDGMENT

(Phase 1: The Investigation)

In our last lesson we studied Daniel's amazing prophecy of the pre-advent judgment that began in 1844. In this study we will learn the truth about the judgment itself. The truth of a final judgment is deeply rooted in the Bible. It is mentioned scores of times. Psalmists, prophets and apostles all bear consistent testimony to it. Jesus also made many pointed references to the judgment. It marks the climax of some of His greatest parables, and is the focal point of much of His teaching.

The Bible writers had a unique perspective on the judgment. They did not treat it as bad news, but as good news! They did not view it as something outside the redemptive process, but as part of that process. They saw the judgment as proof that God is a moral God, and that the universe has a moral base. They saw it as proof that history is not an aimless and undirected process. To the Bible writers, history was going somewhere. Therefore, they welcomed the judgment with eagerness and hope, because it promised the ultimate exposure and condemnation of evil, and the ultimate vindication and triumph of righteousness and truth.

1. Can we be certain there will be a judgment?

Acts 17:31 [God] has appointed a day on which He will judge the world....

2. How does Daniel describe the Judgment scene when Jesus moves from the Holy Place to the Most Holy?

Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14 I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened. ...I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ...

Note: Here we see the "Ancient of Days," the Father, seated upon His throne surrounded by a myriad of angels. The books are opened, and then comes our great High Priest the Lord Jesus. Here Daniel was given a vision of the Day of Atonement which began on 1844.

3. Who will be brought into this judgment?

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. ...

Note: If we received a summons to appear in an earthly court, would it not crowd out every other consideration? Would we not talk about it by day and dream of it at night? Would we not want to know all that we could about what was going to happen, and how to prepare for it? Would we not make an appointment with our lawyer without delay?

4. With which class will the Judgment begin?

1 Peter 4:17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Note: The first phase of the Judgment begins with those who profess to have accepted Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Thus, their sins have been transferred to Jesus, and then to the heavenly sanctuary where the detailed records of their lives are kept. An investigation is made to determine the genuineness of their decision.

5. Who is the prosecuting attorney?

Revelation 12:9, 10 The great dragon...called the Devil and Satan ...the accuser of our brethren...

Note: Satan is your only accuser. Unfortunately, some Christians think Jesus is trying to convince the Father to spare us during the judgment, but this is not true! (See John 16:27, Luke 12:32 & John 3:16).

6. Who is the defense attorney?

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate [lawyer] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

7. Who is the judge?

John 5:22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.

Note: Jesus is our attorney, but more than this, the Father places in the hands of the Son all judgment (Also see John 5:27, Acts 10:42 & Acts 17:31).

8. Our Study of the Bible will reveal three phases to the Judgment.

1. Phase one is the investigation of the righteous.
 - a. If found “not guilty” they are acquitted, “set free.” (John 5:24)
 - b. If found guilty then they proceed to phases 2 and 3.
2. Phase two is the sentencing of the wicked.
3. Phase three is the executive portion of the sentence.

9. What are the books talked about in Daniel 7:10?

- a. **The book of iniquity:** *Jeremiah 2:22 “...Yet your iniquity is marked before Me,” says the Lord GOD.*
- b. **The book of remembrance:** *Malachi 3:16 ... So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.*
- c. **The book of life:** *Rev. 3:5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.*

Note: The book of iniquity contains the record of one’s sinful acts; the book of remembrance contains the record of one’s good deeds; and the book of life contains the names all that have ever entered the service of God.

10. What is the standard by which all will be judged?

Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether it is good or whether it is evil.

James 2:12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

Note: The divine law is not something that exists apart from God. It is the out flowing of His essential personality. It is simply the reflection of His character. This law is the standard by which the characters and the lives of men will be tested in the judgment.

11. What will the judgment bring to light?

Eccl. 12:13, 14 ... For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, ...

Matt 12: 36, 37 ... every idle word...

12. What is Jesus seeking to accomplish in His followers (the church) through the judgment process?

Ephesians 5:25-27 ... Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

13. What happens if a sin remains on the books unrepented of and unforsaken?

Exodus 32:33 ... Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.

Ezekiel 18:24 But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, ...All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, ...he shall die.

Note: When any have sins remaining on the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and their record of good deeds will be erased from the book of remembrance.

14. But what if I have repented of my sin, and have turned from it, and by faith have claimed the blood of Jesus as my atoning sacrifice, will my sins be blotted out and my name remain in the book of life?

Isaiah 43:25 I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.

Revelation 3:5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Note: Jesus will present the plea that all who have overcome through faith in His blood be forgiven, and crowned as joint heirs with Him.

15. While the investigative judgment is taking place, what is my part?

2 Corinthians. 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you are disqualified.

Note: We must search our own hearts and lives, by comparing ourselves with Jesus and His law. We are not irrevocably “locked” into salvation by one initial or isolated act of believing. We are called to continue in Jesus; there must be a sustained, persevering commitment to Him--a continuous, personal union with Him (John 15:4, 8:31), and this is accomplished by choosing Him as our Lord and Savior every day.

Consider: If we combine our understanding of the gospel, with what we have learned regarding the judgment we will have no difficulty understanding the operation of the pre-advent judgment. Here we will recognize the key-importance of the power of choice in our day-to-day lives.

1. Our initial choice to “receive Christ” (John 1:12) by faith puts us “in Christ” (2 Cor. 5:17). At the moment of our initial commitment, Jesus gives us the legal right to live forever with Him (John 5:24; 1 John 5:11, 12).
2. Our sustained, habitual faith choices to keep on receiving Him, keeps us “in Christ”: in a state of perfect security (John 15:1-5; Colossians 2:6, 7; John 10:27, 28).
3. Consciously and deliberately, we must renew our surrender to Jesus’ control on a day-by-day, moment-by-moment basis. This is what the Bible means by “abiding in Him” (1 John 2:28); “Continuing in the faith” (Colossians 1:23); “enduring unto the end” (Matthew 24:13); “keeping ourselves in the love of God,” (Jude 21) and “holding fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end” (Hebrews 3:6, 14).
4. One factor, and one factor alone, can jeopardize our security, and take us out of Christ: that is our own will--our own decision to do things “our way.” So one element of risk remains--but that lies within ourselves. While no man, or demon, or circumstance can destroy our security in Jesus, we can destroy that security by carelessness, or perversity, or neglect (Revelation 2:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 9:27; Hebrews 2:3).

5. Accordingly, when our individual cases are reviewed in the Judgment, before Jesus comes to “bring His reward with Him” (Rev. 22:12; Daniel 12:1, 2), only one matter will need to be investigated: “Did this man/woman continue to abide in Jesus?” Remembering, that an abiding relationship with Jesus is always manifested in a life of obedience to His Ten Commandments (John 14:15; 1 John 2; 4).
6. In the end we pass judgment on ourselves. By the consistent quality of our personal, day-to-day choices, we are now deciding, or sealing, our eternal destiny. A godly character is made up of the thousands of individual choices which we are now making in response to the Holy Spirit’s prompting.
7. At no point in time, either at conversion, during our Christian lives, or at the judgment, does God act arbitrarily, to override or manipulate our power of choice. The decisions of heaven’s court are not arbitrary. It is our decisions that determine the verdict. Heaven simply recognizes them. At the Judgment, God takes note of the current quality of our commitment—our current orientation of heart and will—and places His seal of confirmation upon the life-style or character that we have consistently chosen. God’s verdict in the judgment simply discloses and vindicates the quality and direction of our habitual personal choices.

Summary: As free moral agents, we are the architects of our own destiny. Our decisions all along the way are what count, not just those at the beginning. Acceptance of Jesus does not make us into robots. The salvation process is not automatic. Our initial commitment to Him does not take away our power of choice. We are always free to choose another master. Accordingly, it is not God’s future decisions at the judgment that we need to fear; it is our own decisions, the ones that we are making now and they are under our own control.

Note: These considerations should not rob us of the quiet assurance that all Christians may have. They only protect us from the false assurance of resting comfortably in a relationship that has never existed or one that we have since lost.

16. When the investigative judgment is “done” what verdict is reached?

Revelation 22:10-14 “...He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

Hebrews 9:28 “So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Note: The removal of sin from the sanctuary is the final act of the sanctuary service. Thus, when Jesus’ work in the investigative judgment is done, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended and Jesus returns for His children.

17. Is Jesus able to secure my case before the Heavenly court?

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus....

Your Response

He’s inviting you to turn your life over to Him today. Won’t you place your trust in God’s word, and choose Jesus as your caring Savior, Friend, Attorney, and Judge in the Judgment?

ANSWER: _____